What is Title I?

Title I is the largest federal aid program for elementary, middle and high schools. Through this program the government gives money to school districts around the country based on the number of low income families in each district. Each district uses its Title I money for extra educational services to help children who are behind in school.

You may remember this program by its old name, Chapter I. The new title is different and based on three important ideas:

1. All students should work toward the same high standards.
2. Local districts, schools and parents know best what their students need to succeed.
3. Parents are partners in helping students achieve.

Here are some questions that parents commonly ask:

How can Title I monies be used?

Districts, schools, and parents have a lot of choice in how they set up their Title I programs, as long as it helps low-achieving students meet the same standards that have been set for al other students. The money can be used for after school programs, weekend programs or summer school programs. The money can also be used to train teachers and other staff members, to buy equipment and learning materials, to hire special teachers, tutors or aides. The money can be used to support parental involvement activities.

Which students can get Title I help?

Title I programs are for those children who need help most – who are furthest behind in school. Each school community decides which students are most in need of services. This is called "targeted assistance." Schools where more than half of all students are low income can operate on a "school-wide Title I project." This means that all students in the schools can receive Title I services.

How can Title I help me as a parent?

Title I money can be used for many types of parent involvement activities such as family literacy, parent meetings and training, transportation and childcare.

Money can be used to purchase materials for parents to use at home and to fund parent resource centers.

How can I find out what my Title I program offers?

All Title I programs have a plan in place for including parents. This plan is called a parent involvement policy. This policy explains how the school district supports the role parents play in education. This plan must include a compact which is a written document explaining what schools and parents are supposed to do to help students succeed.

If my child is in Title I, how can I help?

Parents can help by adding to what the teacher is doing with their children, by learning more about the school, by supporting their children in school and becoming actively involved in making decisions about their children's education.

Parents can find out what their children are being taught, keeping close touch with the teachers, making sure their children do homework and attending parent-teacher conferences. Parents can also become school volunteers or join the local parent-teacher organization.

How can I help my school's Title I program?

Parents can help by reviewing the school's Title I program, helping to develop the parent involvement program, or working on the committee that reviews the state's Title I policies.

How will I know if the Title I program at my child's school is working?

Parents can get this information from the school profile. This is like a report card for the school. If gives information about the progress of the students in the program. If the programs are not working, schools and districts are required by law to improve them.

What else do I need to know?

Ask about how a Title I program is put together, ask how Title I is working in your school, or you can ask about Title I and your child. Your child's teacher may be able to answer many of these questions, or you can ask the school principal. The Title I directors, the superintendent of schools, and members of the school board, are also good sources of information. You can ask members of the parent-teacher organization, the parent coordinators, staff members at the parent resource center, and even other parents.